Coaching Journal

Carole Bevis
Hand-in-Hand Primary School

BACKGROUND

Ms. E. is a teacher returning to work after staying home with young children. . Technology has changed a great deal in the years she has been away from teaching. I spent this first session just getting to know her and asking her the differences in when she last left the classroom and now. I want to build a relationship with Ms. E. and get to know her personally and professionally. I want to understand the difficulties she may be having in re-entering the classroom in relation to the time that has passed and how this class was created. Beginning teachers are evaluated more often and I don't want her to view me as an evaluator but rather as a partner. This is an overflow inclusion class that was created several weeks after school began and many of the students have difficult behaviors. I also don't want to overwhelm her with technology when she has other more pressing issues; however, I want her to know I am there to support her. At this point she may not even know what to ask for and I don't want her to see me as another evaluator of her skills. We will begin this endeavor as partners with neither of us having more of a voice than the other. This approach will work for both of us, as I can't assume to know what her needs are. Knight (2007) states that "ICs find that they have to help teachers find their voice," I believe that will be what Ms. E. needs.

I ask Mrs. E. to clarify some of her answers on a follow up questionnaire she had filled out. She indicated she uses technology for the just basic teacher duties and she is not comfortable hunting for new technologies on her own but would rather have someone guide her. Mrs. E. also discussed her lack of comfort in allowing students choice in using technology. She says she wants more training in using the SMARTBoard as she is using it primarily to play YouTube videos. I ask her if she would be comfortable guiding students through some beginning research projects. Her response was, "in kindergarten?" I told her I could show her how if she was interested and she agreed.

1st Session   3/4/14

Strategy:

In meeting with Ms. E. she felt she wanted to understand the systems that she mandated to use every day. This included the online system we use for taking attendance and how to obtain student information from it. Attendance is an important teacher responsibility at our school and only teachers are allowed to go into the system. Our school system uses, Infinite Campus, it not only takes attendance, it also houses a great deal of information that will be useful to her. I want to show her how she can research and print out a child's contact information, RTI information, and gather resources to help her students. Since our principal has asked everyone to make two visits daily from a link on this site, I feel this is a good place to begin. I presented Ms. E. with the

Teacher Meeting Log I revised from the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning and she was eager to create a plan. According to the [ISTE White Paper](#) on coaching, I have "enrolled" the teacher as she indicates she would like to collaborate with me. Ms. E. has also helped "identify" the practice she would like to work on.

As this enrolling and identifying phase went so quickly, I began modeling for her how to log in and navigate Infinite Campus.

Skill and Affective Changes:

This session helped Ms. E. feel more confident about navigating Infinite Campus. She confessed she was worried she would be called to office for doing something wrong as all aspects of attendance is stressed a great deal. I gave her a printed copy of each tab in Infinite Campus and she used these to jot notes in the side margins. After modeling for her how to get student information, we traded places at the computer and she became the driver and I became the rider as we went through the whole process again.

Reflection on Challenges:

Ms. E. expressed how much she felt she gained from this one-on-one session as opposed to the large and crowded professional learning sessions conducted on a Smartboard. Although this session went well this was not the ultimate goal I have in mind for her. I reminded her that at our team planning meeting, we discussed the upcoming technology and research in writing standards for the upcoming fourth nine week period. Since we have collaborated together, I am hoping she is willing to have me come into her classroom and help move her students into lessons that incorporate using technology for research.

2nd Session   3/7/14

Strategy:

Mrs. E. met me in hall and asked about an email our principal sent out requiring all teachers to daily visit a site from Infinite Campus referred to as SLDS. She is concerned because this site is giving her some problems. Infinite Campus has a link titled SLDS and it has a treasure of resources. However, the site is not that friendly about allowing someone to go in and out of its different features. Therefore, I'm going to model for Ms. E. how to create a folder in SLDS as this will help her gather her favorite resources into one place and not be at the mercy of the site. Administration can tell how many times we use this site and it has been mandated that we all visit it at least twice a day. Not only will Ms. E. will get credit on her evaluation for using the site, she will discover some engaging and interactive games that help students meet some

common core standards. These games can also be leveled for students of different abilities and since this is an inclusion class this will work well for her. Ms. E. has indicated that she wants my suggestions on what I think are the most pressing and immediate areas she should learn in her new position, therefore, I will steer her towards those areas that will help her with the fundamentals of her job. I believe if she is comfortable with these areas she will more likely implement new ideas with her students.

We began by exploring SLDS through its domain headings. I then showed her how each domain had a drop down menu that displayed the common core standards that she might work on. We picked two math standards, two language standards, and one social studies standard that her class will be working on in this 4th nine weeks. First, I modeled for her how to look up a resource for a particular standard in math. Together we viewed several and decided which ones we wanted to keep based on what standards the students needed the most help with. Next, I modeled for her how to create folders and she modeled creating several more. We then saved two items from each domain and discussed how this will save time and have a resource quickly available without having to start the search process all over again. We decided she needed some more time to explore and discover what SLDS can provide for her. We made a plan for me to come back in a couple of days and look over the additional items she has added to her folders and have her watch me guide her students in using one of the game-based activities.
Skill and Affective Changes:

Ms. E. has already gained some experience with Infinite Campus because she is required to use it every day, and as SLDS is an offshoot of that program she is showing more confidence with it as well. She has learned to create folders and place game-based resources in each folder. We discussed the different ways she might use these games; in small group instruction, large group instruction, independent group activities, on student station computers or on the SMARTBoard. She has asked that I come back and show her how to orchestrate using it with students who are in independent groups while others are engaged in small group activities with the teacher. I agreed to model this for her.

Reflection on Challenges:

Modeling for her a rotation of small groups with students I'm not familiar with will be a challenge. My own students know what is expected of them and using the SLDS games on the SMARTBoard works well in my classroom. However, changing students' routine is never an easy task and especially when they are someone else's students. I will approach Mrs. E. about coming into my class and observe how this tool can be used as a small group independent activity. Although, I am proud of our working relationship and Mrs. E.'s progress, I still want to move her into using technology to help her students with research.

3rd Session   3/11& 12/14

Strategy:

Today I'm going to show Ms. E. how to use a ready-made template on the SMARTBoard. Modeling, observing and feedback is essential for learning, according to Knight (2007, p. 110), therefore, I will implement his philosophy of "I Dot, We Do It, You Do It" approach. She wants to use the SMARTBoard for large group time as she as seen other teachers using it and she wants to know what she is missing. I showed her my "Lucky Leader" template and ask her if she would like to use mine. She is thrilled as the way she has been doing this scheduled time she says was very inefficient. From her work station, I pulled the template up from the server and advised her to create a folder of SMARTBoard activities and save this item to it. I then model with her students the "Lucky Leader" activity using the SMARTBoard. She chooses the child to be Lucky Leader and we use his name to reinforce language and math skills. I model with the students identifying the consonants and vowels of his name, counting each of them separately, and adding them together. Next we generate as many words as we can using the letters in his name. As a student raises his hand they are called on to come write it on the SMARTBoard. I hand Mrs. E. the pen and she takes over the activity. The following day I drop by during her class's Lucky Leader time. She already has the template up on the SMARTBoard and has her class engaged in the lesson. She asks the Lucky Leader what he wants the class to know about him and she begins to write his sentence on the SMARTBoard. She is writing, "I like Spiderman" and asks the students, "Who wants to take a stab at spelling spider?" The students are enthused and raising their hands to be called on. She then hands the Smart Pen over to one student at a time as they write words they have created from the letter of their classmate's name.

Skill and Affective Changes:

While I modeled using the template, Ms. E. took on the role of student during this lesson participating with her students in generating new words from the Lucky Leader's name and modeling math strategies. She showed no intimidation and was very excited to see a template that makes this time more manageable. She asked that I come back the next day and watch her use the template on her own with the students. She showed a great deal of confidence and as I watched her she seemed to be unaware of me and very involved with her students and the lesson.

Reflection on Challenges:

I feel good about this lesson simply because of Ms. E.'s enthusiasm. She is eager and excited about using this tool and I believe she will refine it to suit her students' needs. Although this is a required morning activity, it is also open ended enough for her to change and differentiate it to meet her students' needs. The daily implementation of Lucky Leader time will also help build her confidence and proficiency in using the SMARTBoard. This activity is also helping her become more comfortable in allowing students to use the SMARTBoard to write on their own.

4th Session   3/13/14

Strategy:

Ms. E. has indicated she wants to know how to place books on hold through our [Destiny](#) Library system. During her planning time we discussed how Destiny could help her organize materials for upcoming units. I showed her how to create in My Lists topics for units. I then showed her how to search the library for books, theme boxes and audio/visual materials for these units and place these items on hold. As the library closes each day at 3:30 it is difficult for teachers to do this during the instructional day. However, this tool allows the teacher to buy time and place the holds from her work station. Ms. E. is very excited to see the potential of Destiny and says, "These units will be there for me next year!" We made an agreement that I would come back in two days during planning time and look over the lists she created and give her feedback on her accomplishments.

Skill and Affective Changes:

Ms. E. was very excited to show me the topics and resources she has created in Destiny. She demonstrated for me the list she created along with several items in each list and how to place them on hold. This activity has also helped Ms. E. become more familiar with the common core standards we are responsible for teaching. We discuss the upcoming research in writing standards that require students to use technology tools. We also discussed the upcoming field trip to the zoo and how we might incorporate a study of animals that will help students gain some prior knowledge before the visit to the zoo. I asked her if I could introduce her to the science website, [PebbleGo](#), the school has procured for us to help meet several common core science and writing standards. She agrees and seems both excited and apprehensive.

Reflection on Challenges:

I feel good about this session too. It gave me a chance to familiarize her with a new tool and it also gave her time to explore and experiment without someone looking over her shoulder. She is very excited about having another tool in her toolbox and I can see the confidence building in her. Destiny Library systems was a perfect tool to help compliment the teaching of beginning research standards. These standards are difficult to achieve with kindergarteners and I know I can help make meeting them a little easier. Although, many teachers are not familiar with the [ITSE standards](#) for teachers, we are moving forward in areas that are going to help her model and engage students in using digital tools because she is using them.

5th Session   3/18/14

Strategy:

Mrs. E. and I meet during her planning time as her students are at specials and I clarify for her that this session will entail beginning research skills using technology for the following common core standards:

ELACCKW6 - with guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
ELACCKW7 - Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).

ELACCKW8: With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

I explain that I have a site in mind that will help students meet all three of these standards and I believe she will personally find it interesting and so will her students. I begin the lesson with an exploration of the PebbleGo site; however, it offers so much I tell her we will focus on animals. I also explain this will help give students some prior knowledge before the field trip to the zoo and explain the students will be required to write about their experience the following day. We sit side by side at the student computers because I want us to use the program the same way students would. I give her login information and we navigate to animals and then mammals. I tell I have been to this zoo before and I notice many of the same animals the students will see there. We explore the elements of the site together which include; picture, videos and narrated books. We discuss as we explore the many possibilities of using it with her students. Additionally, we pull the program up on her teacher station and explore the ways she can use this site in whole group instruction from the SMARTBoard. She is excited to see that it is interactive on the SMARTBoard and that it contains not only information about animals but games that test the students' comprehension of what they have learned thus far.

Skill and Affective Changes:

Mrs. E. is very excited about using PebbleGo and she says she is no longer afraid to teach research skills to kindergarteners. She said she also appreciates me showing her one on one about this site and she feels she can handle it on her own with her students, however, she did ask if she got into trouble would I help her. She came up with the idea of letting students print out a picture from the site of an animal they want to write about. This will be the prompt that will help keep them focused on the task. She also sees how she can use our previous session with the Destiny library system to help with these standards. She says she will create a folder for animals and check out numerous books to keep in her classroom during this unit of study. As we keep each nine weeks standards in a grid I showed her how she can use student interactions on the website and their writing as evidence in their portfolios.

Reflection on Challenges:

I feel a little bit manipulative getting Mrs. E. to the research standards; however, some of her changes came through her own desire to know and understand some of the basic systems teachers use every day. The adoption of the teacher tool of Destiny and the student site of PebbleGo was an enduring one that I believe will become habitual for her and help refine her

skills. I believe this is the beginning of Mrs. E. going deeper in her lessons and seeing how even very young students can use technology on their own, collaborate with their peers using it and create original projects. As Mrs. E. indicated on the survey, she is not comfortable allowing students' freedom in choosing and using technology of their choice. This creates lessons that low on the LoTi scale because they are more teacher centered, rather than student centered. However, as she becomes more comfortable and proficient in using the tools, I believe she will create more engaging and meaningful lessons with her students. This lesson in particular will help her see just how much kindergarteners can engage with technology and use it to produce collaborative projects.

I have enjoyed working with Mrs. E. because she is so easy to get along with and we have now I believe formed a friendship. I know she will call on me again to help with the many things that are sure to arise when using technology. However, I know one day I will encounter the person that won't be as easy as she is. That gives me great pause and I wonder if I will remember and employ the philosophy and steps we have learned from Knight. I also know that being in close proximity to someone helps; because we work across the hall from one another it was easy for us to talk and form a relationship and that helped to employ some of these techniques. This was a fun assignment and I really enjoyed helping Mrs. E. and I hope she tells someone else and they ask me to help them.

References

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